

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A vascular access device comprising:
a housing; and
a septum having a proximal end₁; a distal end₂ and an outer surface and having an annular groove positioned within the outer surface ~~septum~~ such that the septum has a generally dumbbell shape, the septum further having a slit ~~extends~~ extending from the proximal end to the distal end of the septum through which a needle may pass; and a biasing element positioned at least in part within the annular groove and urging the opening to a closed condition, the septum and the biasing element disposed within the housing.
2. (Cancelled)
3. (Previously presented) The vascular access device of claim 1 further comprising a tube attached to and in fluid communication with the housing.
4. (Previously presented) The vascular access device of claim 3 further comprising a female adapter attached to the tube.
5. (Cancelled)
6. (Previously presented) The vascular access device of claim 1 wherein the biasing element is a C-shaped clip.
7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently amended) A vascular access device including:

a catheter;

a housing in fluid connection with the catheter;

a septum including ~~includes~~ a dumbbell shape disposed within the housing; said septum having a proximal end; a distal end; and a slit ~~extends~~ extending from the proximal end to the distal end of the septum;

and a biasing element operably engaging the septum and urging the septum to a closed condition wherein the biasing element is in contact with the outside longitudinal surface of the septum, wherein the biasing element is in a single fixed location with respect to the housing and continuously exerts a biasing force on the septum, wherein said septum further comprises an annular groove disposed in the outer surface of the septum and wherein the biasing element is placed within the annular groove;

a needle slidably disposed with respect to the catheter, the needle having a proximal end and a distal end with an opening at the proximal end, wherein the needle defines a notch therein adjacent to the distal end, and wherein a notch distance is defined as the distance between a proximal end of the notch and a distal end of the opening in the distal end of the needle;

wherein the length of the septum is greater than the notch distance such that leakage of bodily fluid emanating from the distal end of the needle, catheter and the notch is contained within the septum even when the needle is slidably disposed within the septum.

9. (Original) The vascular access device of claim 8 wherein the septum includes an elastic plug disposed in the housing and having a proximal end, a distal end, an outside longitudinal surface extending between the proximal end and the distal end, and a slit disposed longitudinally through the elastic plug.

10-12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently amended) A catheter assembly, comprising:

a catheter;

an adapter connected to the catheter, the adapter defining a cavity therein;

an elastic plug having ~~has~~ a dumbbell shape disposed in the adapter and defining a length, a circumference, an annular groove formed within a portion of the circumference, and a slit disposed longitudinally through the elastic plug;

a biasing element disposed in the adapter about the elastic plug and in contact with the annular groove within the circumference at a permanently fixed position wherein the biasing element urges the septum to a closed condition; and

a removable needle extending through the slit, the needle having a proximal end and a distal end with an opening at the proximal end, wherein the needle defines a notch therein adjacent to the distal end, and wherein a notch distance is defined as the distance between a proximal end of the notch and a distal end of the opening in the distal end of the needle such that leakage of bodily fluid emanating from the distal end of the needle, ~~catheter and the notch~~ is contained within the elastic plug even when the needle is slidably disposed within the elastic plug.

14. (Original) The catheter assembly of claim 13 wherein the biasing element exerts a radially directed compressive force against the outside longitudinal surface of the elastic plug.

15. (Original) The catheter assembly of claim 13 wherein the biasing element does not extend completely about the circumference.

16. (Original) The catheter assembly of claim 13 wherein the elastic plug is mounted to the adapter at a fixed axial position.

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Original) The catheter assembly of claim 13 further comprising a tube in fluid communication with the adapter and a finger grip attached to the needle at its proximal end.

20. (Original) The catheter assembly of claim 19 wherein the biasing element is a C-shaped clip that does not extend completely about the circumference of the elastic plug but does exert a radially directed compressive force against the outside longitudinal surface of the elastic plug.

21. (Previously presented) The vascular access device of claim 6 wherein the clip is constructed of metal or metal alloy.

22. (Previously presented) The vascular access device of claim 8 wherein the biasing element is a C-shaped clip.

23. (Previously presented) The vascular access device of claim 22 wherein the biasing element is constructed of metal or metal alloy.